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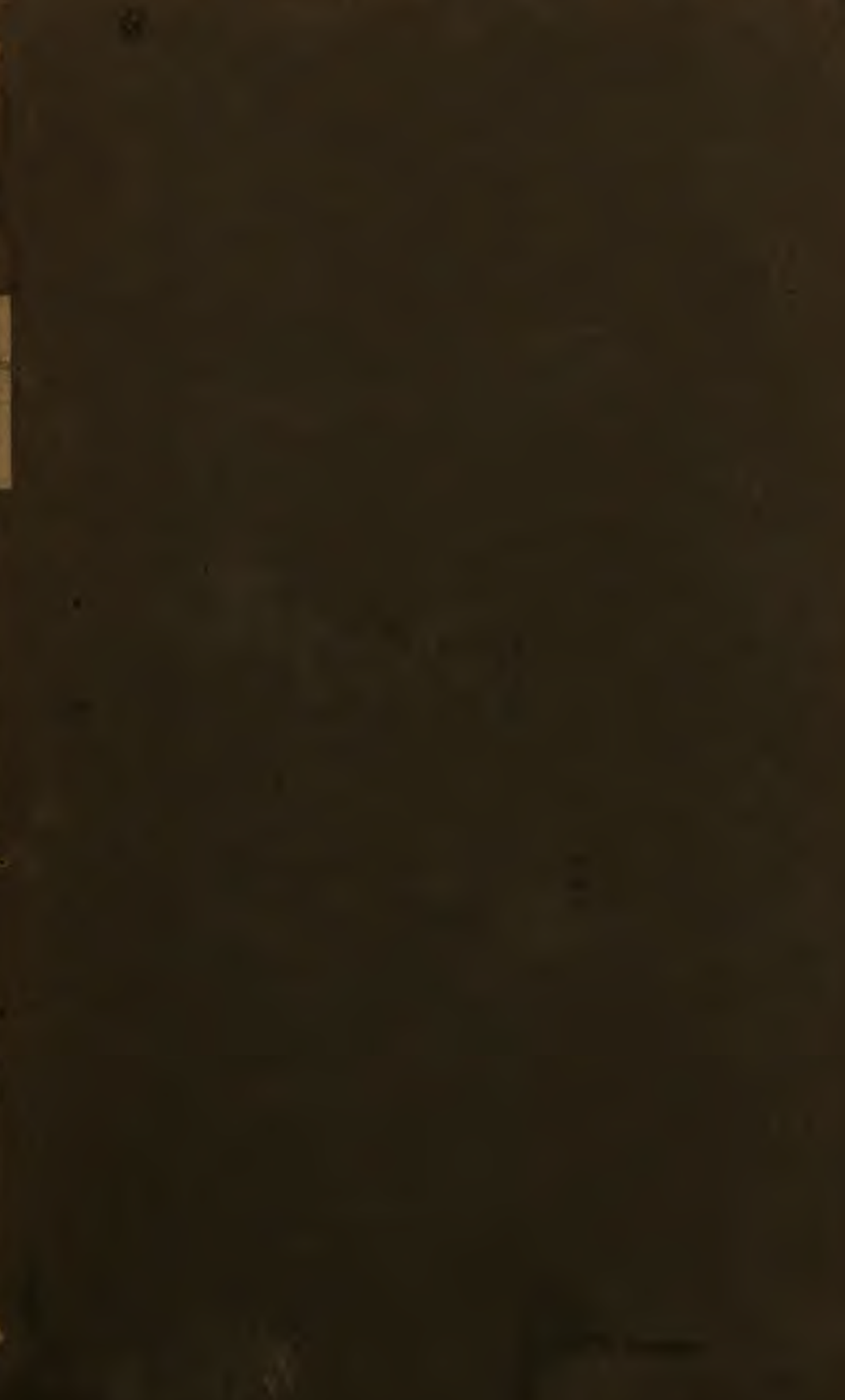
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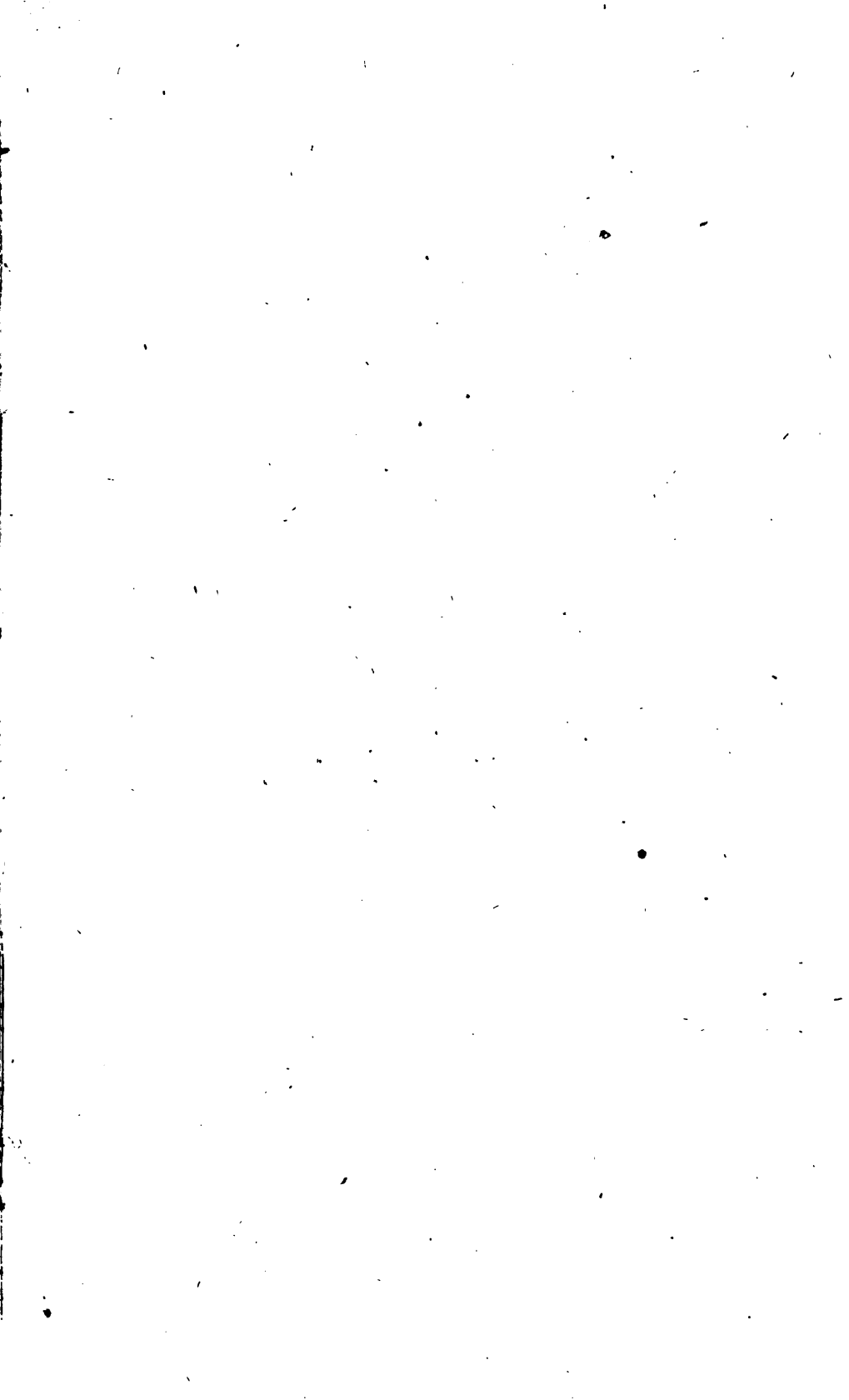
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DON JUAN.

CANTOS XII.—XIII.—AND XIV.

“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more
Cakes and Ale?”—“Yes, by St. Anne; and Ginger shall be hot i’ the
mouth too!”—*Twelfth Night, or What you Will.*

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON, 1823:

PRINTED FOR JOHN HUNT,
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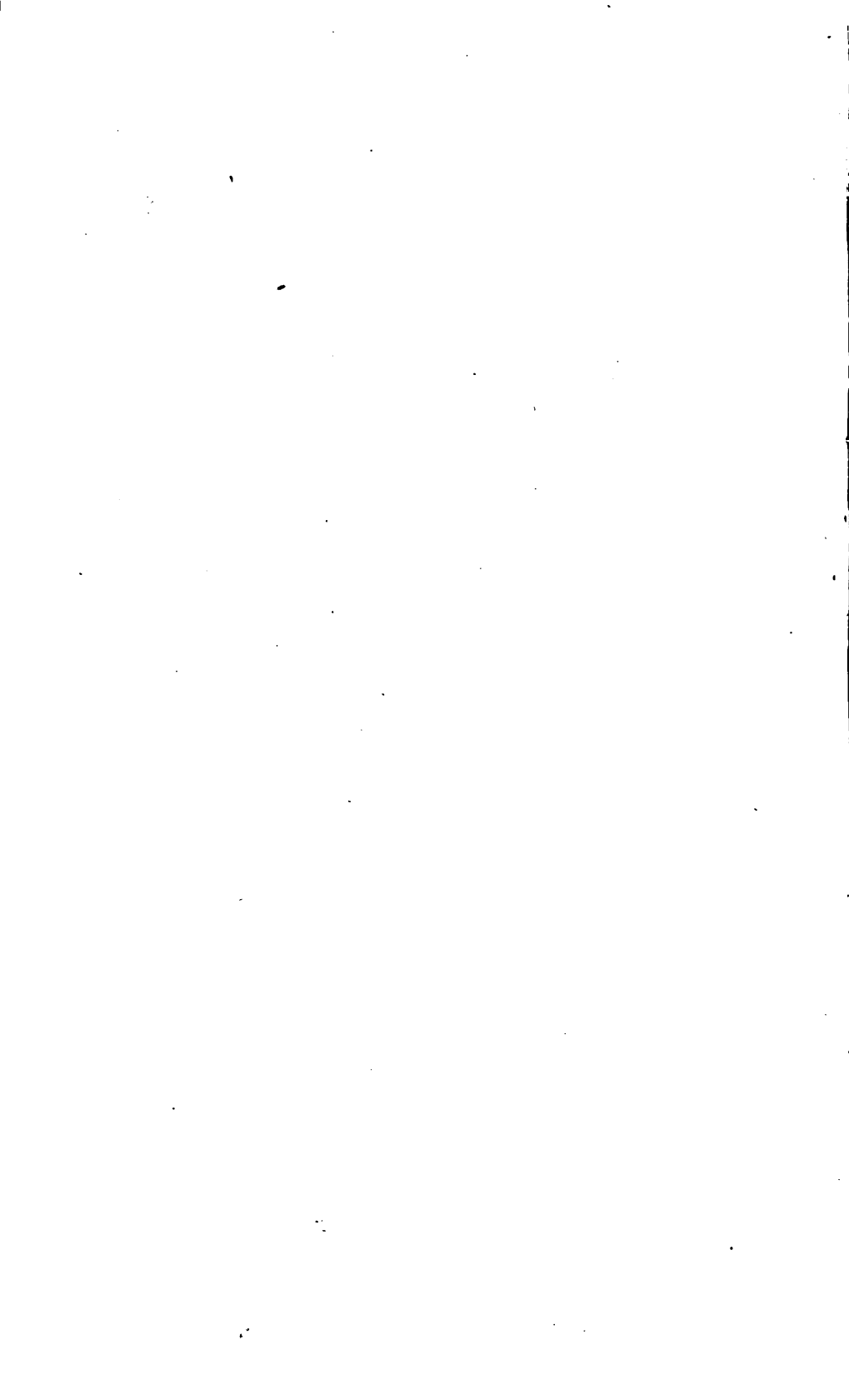


LONDON:

PRINTED BY C. H. REYNELL, BROAD STREET, GOLDEN SQUARE.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XII.



DON JUAN.

CANTO XII.

I.

OF all the barbarous Middle Ages, that

Which is the most barbarous is the middle age
Of man ; it is—I really scarce know what ;

But when we hover between fool and sage,
And don't know justly what we would be at,—

A period something like a printed page,
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were,—

II.

Too old for youth,—too young, at thirty-five,
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore,—
I wonder people should be left alive ;
But since they are, that epoch is a bore :
Love lingers still, although 'twere late to wive ;
And as for other love, the illusion's o'er ;
And money, that most pure imagination,
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

III.

Oh Gold ! Why call we misers miserable ?
Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall ;
Theirs is the best bower-anchor, the chain cable
Which hold fast other pleasures great and small.
Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

IV.

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker ;

Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss ;

But making money, slowly first, then quicker,

And adding still a little through each cross

(Which *will* come over things) beats love or liquor,

The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.

Oh Gold ! I still prefer thee unto paper,

Which makes bank credit like a bark of vapour.

V.

Who hold the balance of the world ? Who reign

O'er Congress, whether royalist or liberal ?

Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain ?

(That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber all.)

Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain

Or pleasure ? Who make politics run glibber all ?

The shade of Bonaparte's noble daring ?—

Jew Rothschild, and his fellow Christian Baring.

VI.

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,
Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan
Is not a merely speculative hit,
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
Republics also get involved a bit ;
Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown
On 'Change ; and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII.

Why call the miser miserable ? as
I said before : the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise : a hermit would not miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt Wealth's austerities ?
Because, you'll say, nought calls for such a trial ;—
Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII.

He is your only poet ;—passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays
Possess'd, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure
Nations athwart the deep : the golden rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure ;
On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze,
While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dyes
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX.

The lands on either side are his : the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads
For him the fragrant produce of each trip ;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip ;
His very cellars might be kings' abodes ;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands—the intellectual lord of all.

X.

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,

To build a college, or to found a race,

A hospital, a church,—and leave behind

Some dome surmounted by his meagre face :

Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind

Even with the very ore which makes them base :

Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,

Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI.

But whether all, or each, or none of these

May be the hoarder's principle of action,

The fool will call such mania a disease :—

What is his *own*?—Go look at each transaction,

Wars, revels, loves—do these bring men more ease

Than the mere plodding through each “vulgar
fraction?”

Or do they benefit mankind? Lean Miser!

Let spendthrifts' heirs enquire of yours—who's wiser?

XII.

How beauteous are rouleaus ! how charming chests,
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old Victors, all whose heads and crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their visage shines,
But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering cirque confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp :—
Yes ! ready money is Aladdin's lamp.

XIII.

“ Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,”—“ for
Love
“ Is Heaven, and Heaven is Love :”—so sings the bard ;
Which it were rather difficult to prove,
(A thing with poetry in general hard.)
Perhaps there may be something in “ the grove,”
At least it rhymes to “ Love ;” but I'm prepared
To doubt (no less than Landlords of their rental)
If “ courts” and “ camps” be quite so sentimental.

XIV.

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and Cash alone:

Cash rules the grove, and fells it too besides ;
Without cash, camps were thin, and courts were none ;
Without cash, Malthus tells you, " take no brides."

So Cash rules Love the ruler, on his own

High ground, as Virgin Cynthia sways the tides ;
And as for " Heaven being Love," why not say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 'tis Matrimony.

XV.

Is not all love prohibited whatever,

Excepting marriage? which is love no doubt
After a sort ; but somehow people never
With the same thought the two words have helped out :
Love may exist *with* marriage, and *should* ever,
And marriage also may exist without ;
But love *sans* banns is both a sin and shame,
And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI.

Now, if the "court" and "camp" and "grove" be not
Recruited all with constant married men,
Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
I say *that* line's a lapsus of the pen;—
Strange too in my "buon camerado" Scott,
So celebrated for his morals, when
My Jeffrey held him up as an example
To me;—of which these morals are a sample.

XVII.

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
And that's enough; succeeded in my youth,
The only time when much success is needed:
And my success produced what I in sooth
Cared most about; it need not now be pleaded—
Whate'er it was, 'twas mine: I've paid, in truth,
Of late, the penalty of such success,
But have not learned to wish it any less.

XVIII.

That suit in Chancery,—which some persons plead

In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,

In the faith of their procreative creed,

Baptize Posterity, or future clay,—

To me seems but a dubious kind of reed

To lean on for support in any way ;

Since odds are that Posterity will know

No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX.

Why, I'm Posterity—and so are you ;

And whom do we remember ? Not a hundred.

Were every memory written down all true,

The tenth or twentieth name would be but blundered :

Even Plutarch's lives have but picked out a few,

And 'gainst those few your annalists have thundered ;

And Mitford in the nineteenth century

Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie (¹)

XX.

Good People all, of every degree,
Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
In this twelfth Canto 'tis my wish to be
As serious as if I had for inditers
Malthus and Wilberforce:—the last set free
The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters;
While Wellington has but enslaved the whites,
And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes.

XXI.

I'm serious—so are all men upon paper;
And why should I not form my speculation,
And hold up to the sun my little taper?
Mankind just now seem wrapt in meditation
On Constitutions and Steam-boats of vapour;
While sages write against all procreation,
Unless a man can calculate his means
Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

XXII.

That's noble! That's romantic! For my part,

I think that " Philo-genitiveness " is—

(Now here's a word quite after my own heart,

Though there's a shorter a good deal than this,

If that politeness set it not apart,

But I'm resolved to say nought that's amiss)—

I say, methinks that " Philo-genitiveness "

Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

XXIII.

And now to business. Oh, my gentle Juan!

Thou art in London—in that pleasant place

Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing

Which can await warm youth in its wild race.

'Tis true that thy career is not a new one;

Thou art no novice in the headlong chase

Of early life; but this is a new land

Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV.

What with a small diversity of climate,
Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
I could send forth my mandate like a primate
Upon the rest of Europe's social state;
But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
Great Britain, which the Muse may penetrate:
All countries have their "Lions," but in thee
There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV.

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
" *Paulo Majora.*" Juan, undecided
Amongst the paths of being "taken in,"
Above the ice had like a skaiter glided:
When tired of play, he flirted without sin
With some of those fair creatures who have prided
Themselves on innocent tantalization,
And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI.

But these are few, and in the end they make
Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
That even the purest people may mistake
Their way through Virtue's primrose paths of snows;
And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
Quick silver Small Talk, ending (if you note it)
With the kind world's Amen!—"Who would have
thought it?"

XXVII.

The little Leila, with her orient eyes
And taciturn Asiatic disposition,
(Which saw all Western things with small surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition)
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII.

The women much divided—as is usual

Amongst the sex in little things or great.

Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to abuse you all—

I have always liked you better than I state :

Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse you all

Of being apt to talk at a great rate ;

And now there was a general sensation

Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX.

In one point only were you settled—and

You had reason ;—'twas that a young Child of Grace,

As beautiful as her own native land,

And far away, the last bud of her race,

Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command

Himself for five, four, three, or two years' space,

Would be much better taught beneath the eye

Of Peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX.

So first there was a generous emulation,

And then there was a general competition

To undertake the orphan's education.

As Juan was a person of condition,

It had been an affront on this occasion

To talk of a subscription or petition ;

But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages,

Whose tale belongs to " Hallam's Middle Ages,"

XXXI.

And one or two sad, separate wives, without

A fruit to bloom upon their withering bough,

Begged to bring *up* the little girl, and "*out*,"—

For that's the phrase that settles all things now,

Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,

And all her points as thorough-bred to show :

And I assure you, that like virgin honey

Tastes their first season (mostly if they have money.)

XXXII.

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy,
The watchful mothers and the careful sisters
(Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy
At making matches, where "tis gold that glisters,"
Than their *he* relatives) like flies o'er candy
Buzz round "*the* Fortune" with their busy battery,
To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery!

XXXIII.

Each aunt, each cousin hath her speculation;
Nay, married dames will now and then discover
Such pure disinterestedness of passion,
I've known them court an heiress for their lover.
"Tantène!" Such the virtues of high station!
Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet's "Dover,"
While the poor rich wretch, object of these cares,
Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

XXXIV.

Some are soon bagged, but some reject three dozen.

’Tis fine to see them scattering refusals

And wild dismay o’er every angry cousin

(Friends of the party) who begin accusals,

Such as—“ Unless Miss (Blank) meant to have chosen

“ Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals

“ To his billets ? *Why* waltz with him ? Why, I pray,

“ Look *yes* last night and yet say *no* to-day ?

XXXV.

“ Why ?—Why ?—— Besides, Fred. really was *attached* ;

“ ’Twas not her fortune—he has enough without :

“ The time will come she’ll wish that she had snatched

“ So good an opportunity, no doubt :—

“ But the old marchioness some plan has hatched,

“ As I’ll tell Aurea at to-morrow’s rout :

“ And after all poor Frederick may do better—

“ Pray did you see her answer to his letter ?”

XXXVI.

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets

Are spurned in turn, until her turn arrives,
After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives :

And when at last the pretty creature gets

Some gentleman who fights, or writes, or drives,
It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected,
To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII.

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,

Worn out with importunity ; or fall
(But here perhaps the instances are fewer)

To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
A hazy widower turned of forty's sure⁽²⁾

(If 'tis not vain examples to recall)
To draw a high prize : now, howe'er he got her, I
See nought more strange in this than t'other lottery.

XXXVIII.

I, for my part—(one “modern instance” more,

“ True ’tis a pity, pity ’tis, ’tis true”)

Was chosen from out an amatory score,

Albeit my years were less discreet than few ;

But though I also had reformed before

Those became one who soon were to be two,

I’ll not gainsay the generous public’s voice,

That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

XXXIX.

Oh, pardon me digression—or at least

Peruse ! ’Tis always with a moral end

That I dissert, like Grace before a feast :

For like an aged aunt, or tiresome friend,

A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,

My Muse by exhortation means to mend

All people, at all times and in most places ;

Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

XL.

But now I'm going to be immoral ; now

I mean to show things really as they are,

Not as they ought to be : for I avow,

That till we see what's what in fact, we're far

From much improvement with that virtuous plough

Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a scar

Upon the black loam long manured by Vice,

Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI.

But first of little Leila we'll dispose ;

For like a day-dawn she was young and pure,

Or, like the old comparison of snows,

Which are more pure than pleasant to be sure.

Like many people every body knows,

Don Juan was delighted to secure

A goodly guardian for his infant charge,

Who might not profit much by being at large.

XLII.

Besides, he had found out that he was no tutor :

(I wish that others would find out the same)

And rather wished in such things to stand neuter,

For silly wards will bring their guardians blame :

So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor

To make his little wild Asiatic tame,

Consulting "the Society for Vice

" Suppression," Lady Pinchbeck was his choice.

XLIII.

Olden she was—but had been very young ;

Virtuous she was—and had been, I believe :

Although the world has such an evil tongue

That—but my chaster ear will not receive

An echo of a syllable that's wrong :

In fact, there's nothing makes me so much grieve

As that abominable tittle tattle,

Which is the cad eschewed by human cattle.

XLIV.

Moreover I've remarked (and I was once

A slight observer in a modest way)

And so may every one except a dunce,

That ladies in their youth a little gay,

Besides their knowledge of the world, and sense

Of the sad consequence of going astray,

Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe

Which the mere passionless can never know.

XLV.

While the harsh Prude indemnifies her virtue

By railing at the unknown and envied passion,

Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,

Or what's still worse, to put you out of fashion,—

The kinder veteran with calm words will court you,

Entreating you to pause before you dash on ;

Expounding and illustrating the riddle

Of Epic Love's beginning, end, and middle.

XLVI.

Now whether it be thus, or that they are stricter,
As better knowing why they should be so,
I think you'll find from many a family picture,
That daughters of such mothers as may know
The world by experience rather than by lecture,
Turn out much better for the Smithfield Show
Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

XLVII.

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talked about—
As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalked about;
She merely was deemed amiable and witty,
And several of her best bon-mots were hawked about;
Then she was given to charity and pity,
And passed (at least the latter years of life)
For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII.

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
She was the mild reprover of the young
Whenever—which means every day—they'd shown
An awkward inclination to go wrong.
The quantity of good she did's unknown,
Or at the least would lengthen out my song:—
In brief, the little orphan of the East
Had raised an interest in her which encreased.

XLIX.

Juan too was a sort of favourite with her,
Because she thought him a good heart at bottom;
A little spoiled, but not so altogether;
Which was a wonder, if you think who got him,
And how he had been tossed, he scarce knew whither:
Though this might ruin others, it did *not* him,
At least entirely, for he had seen too many
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

L.

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth ;

For when they happen at a riper age,

People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,

And wonder Providence is not more sage.

Adversity is the first path to truth :

He who hath proved war, storm, or woman's rage,

Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,

Hath won the experience which is deemed so weighty.

LI.

How far it profits is another matter.—

Our hero gladly saw his little charge

Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter

Being long married, and thus set at large,

Had left all the accomplishments she taught her

To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's barge,

To the next comer ; or—as it will tell

More Muse-like—say like Cytherea's shell.

LII.

I call such things transmission; for there is
A floating balance of accomplishment
Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
According as their minds or backs are bent.
Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss
Of metaphysics; others are content
With music; the most moderate shine as wits,
While others have a genius turned for fits.

LIII.

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, Fine Arts, or finer stays
May be the baits for gentlemen or lords,
With regular descent, in these our days
The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
New vestals claim men's eyes with the same praise
Of "elegant" *et cetera*, in fresh batches—
All matchless creatures and yet bent on matches.

LIV.

But now I will begin my poem.—'Tis

Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this

I've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,

Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure ;
And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV.

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin

About what's called success, or not succeeding :
Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have
chosen ;

'Tis a " great moral lesson " they are reading.
I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do ; but at Apollo's pleading,
If that my Pegasus should not be foundered,
I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI.

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,

Yclept the Great World ; for it is the least,

Although the highest : but as swords have hilts

By which their power of mischief is encreased,

When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,

Thus the low world, north, south, or west, or east,

Must still obey the high—which is their handle,

Their moon, their sun, their gas, their farthing candle.

LVII.

He had many friends who had many wives, and was

Well looked upon by both, to that extent

Of friendship which you may accept or pass,

It does nor good nor harm ; being merely meant

To keep the wheels going of the higher class,

And draw them nightly when a ticket's sent :

And what with masquerades, and fêtes, and balls,

For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII.

A young unmarried man, with a good name
And fortune, has an awkward part to play ;
For good society is but a game,
“ The royal game of Goose,” as I may say,
Where every body has some separate aim,
An end to answer, or a plan to lay—
The single ladies wishing to be double,
The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

LIX.

I don't mean this as general, but particular
Examples may be found of such pursuits :
Though several also keep their perpendicular
Like poplars, with good principles for roots ;
Yet many have a method more *reticular*—
“ Fishers for men,” like Sirens with soft lutes :
For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

LX.

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepanned;
Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
All strut and stays and whiskers, to demand
What "your intentions are?"—One way or other
It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand;
And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI.

I've known a dozen weddings made even *thus*,
And some of them high names: I have also known
Young men who—though they hated to discuss
Pretensions which they never dreamed to have shown—
Yet neither frightened by a female fuss,
Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they formed a pair.

LXII.

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,

A peril—not indeed like love or marriage,

But not the less for this to be depreciated :

It is—I meant and mean not to disparage

The show of virtue even in the vitiated—

It adds an outward grace unto their carriage—

But to denounce the amphibious sort of harlot,

“ *Couleur de rose*,” who's neither white nor scarlet,

LXIII.

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say “ No,”

And won't say “ Yes,” and keeps you on and off-ing,

On a lee shore, till it begins to blow—

Then sees your heart wrecked with an inward scoffing.

This works a world of sentimental woe,

And sends new Werters yearly to their coffin ;

But yet is merely innocent flirtation,

Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV.

“Ye Gods, I grow a talker!” Let us prate.

The next of perils, though I place it *sternest*,
Is when, without regard to “Church or State,”

A wife makes or takes love in upright earnest.
Abroad, such things decide few women’s fate—

(Such, early traveller! is the truth thou learnest)—
But in Old England when a young bride errs,
Poor thing! Eve’s was a trifling case to her’s.

LXV.

For ’tis a low, newspaper, humdrum, law-suit

Country, where a young couple of the same ages
Can’t form a friendship but the world o’erawes it.

Then there’s the vulgar trick of those d—d damages!
A verdict—grievous foe to those who cause it!—

Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
Besides those soothing speeches of the pleaders.
And evidences which regale all readers!

LXVI.

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners ;
A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
The loveliest Oligarchs of our Gynocracy ;
You may see such at all the balls and dinners,
Among the proudest of our Aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste—
And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

LXVII.

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament
Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more ;
For he was sick—no, 'twas not the word *sick* I meant—
But he had seen so much good love before,
That he was not in heart so very weak ;—I meant
But thus much, and no sneer against the shore
Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer stockings,
Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double knockings.

LXVIII.

But coming young from lands and scenes romantic,
Where lives not law-suits must be risked for Passions,
And Passion's self must have a spice of frantic,
Into a country where 'tis half a fashion,
Seemed to him half commercial, half pedantic,
Howe'er he might esteem this moral nation;
Besides (alas! his taste—forgive and pity!)
At first he did not think the women pretty.

LXIX.

I say at *first*—for he found out at *last*,
But by degrees, that they were fairer far
Than the more glowing dames whose lot is cast
Beneath the influence of the Eastern star.
A further proof we should not judge in haste;
Yet inexperience could not be his bar
To taste:—the truth is, if men would confess,
That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

LXX.

Though travelled, I have never had the luck to
Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or Niger,
To that impracticable place Timbuctoo,
Where Geography finds no one to oblige her
With such a chart as may be safely stuck to—
For Europe ploughs in Afric like "*bos piger*;"
But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
No doubt I should be told that black is fair.

LXXI.

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
But I suspect in fact that white is black,
And the whole matter rests upon eye-sight.
Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll attack
Perhaps this new position—but I'm right;
Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en aback :—
He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
Within; and what sees't thou? A dubious spark.

LXXII.

But I'm relapsing into metaphysics,

That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
Construction as your cures for hectic phthisis,

Those bright moths fluttering round a dying flame :
And this reflection brings me to plain physics,

And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
Compared with those of our pure pearls of price,
Those Polar summers, *all* sun, and some ice.

LXXIII.

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose

Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere fishes ;—
Not that there's not a quantity of those

Who have a due respect for their own wishes.
Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows (*)

Are they, at bottom virtuous even when vicious :
They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXIV.

But this has nought to do with their outsides.

I said that Juan did not think them pretty
At the first blush ; for a fair Briton hides
Half her attractions—probably from pity—
And rather calmly into the heart glides,
Than storms it as a foe would take a city ;
But once there (if you doubt this, prithee try)
She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXV.

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning ;
Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warble
Those bravuras (which I still am learning
To like, though I have been seven years in Italy,
And have, or had, an ear that served me prettily ;)—

LXXVI.

She cannot do these things, nor one or two

Others, in that off-hand and dashing style

Which takes so much—to give the devil his due,—

Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,

Nor settles all things in one interview,

(A thing approved as saving time and toil;)—

But though the soil may give you time and trouble,

Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVII.

And if in fact she takes to a “*grande passion*,”

It is a very serious thing indeed:

Nine times in ten 'tis but caprice or fashion,

Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,

The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,

Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed;

But the tenth instance will be a Tornado,

For there's no saying what they will or may do.

LXXVIII.

The reason's obvious : if there's an eclât,

They lose their caste at once, as do the Parias ;

And when the delicacies of the law

Have filled their papers with their comments various,

Society, that china without flaw,

(The hypocrite !) will banish them like Marius,

To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt :

For Fame's a Carthage not so soon rebuilt.

LXXIX.

Perhaps this is as it should be ;—it is

A comment on the Gospel's " Sin no more,

And be thy sins forgiven :"—but upon this

I leave the saints to settle their own score.

Abroad, though doubtless they do much amiss,

An erring woman finds an opener door

For her return to Virtue—as they call

That Lady who should be at home to all.

LXXX.

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,

Knowing that such uneasy Virtue leads

People some ten times less in fact to mind it,

And care but for discoveries and not deeds.

And as for Chastity, you'll never bind it

By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,

But aggravate the crime you have not prevented,

By rendering desperate those who had else repented.

LXXXI.

But Juan was no casuist, nor had pondered

Upon the moral lessons of mankind :

Besides, he had not seen of several hundred

A lady altogether to his mind.

A little "*blâsé*"—'tis not to be wondered

At, that his heart had got a tougher rind :

And though not vainer from his past success,

No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXII.

He also had been busy seeing sights—

The Parliament and all the other houses ;

Had sate beneath the gallery at nights,

To hear debates whose thunder *roused* (not *rouses*)

The world to gaze upon those northern lights (4)

Which flashed as far as where the musk-bull browses :

He had also stood at times behind the throne—

But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham gone.

LXXXIII.

He saw however at the closing session,

That noble sight, when *really* free the nation,

A king in constitutional possession

Of such a throne as is the proudest station,

Though despots know it not—till the progression

Of freedom shall complete their education.

'Tis not mere splendour makes the show august

To eye or heart—it is the people's trust.

LXXXIV.

There too he saw (whate'er he may be now)

A Prince, the prince of princes, at the time
With fascination in his very bow,

And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace-too, rare in every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finished gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXV.

And Juan was received, as hath been said,

Into the best society: and there
Occurred what often happens, I'm afraid,
However disciplined and *debonnaire*:—
The talent and good humour he displayed,
Besides the marked distinction of his air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXVI.

But what, and where, with whom, and when, and why,

Is not to be put hastily together ;

And as my object is morality

(Whatever people say) I don't know whether

I'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,

But harrow up his feelings till they wither,

And hew out a huge monument of pathos,

As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos. ⁽⁵⁾

LXXXVII.

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction

Ends. When the body of the book's begun,

You'll find it of a different construction

From what some people say 'twill be when done :

The plan at present's simply in concoction.

I can't oblige you, reader ! to read on ;

That's your affair, not mine : a real spirit

Should neither court neglect nor dread to bear it.

LXXXVIII.

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
Remember, reader! you have had before
The worst of tempests and the best of battles
That e'er were brewed from elements or gore,
Besides the most sublime of—Heaven knows what else—
An Usurer could scarce expect much more—
But my best Canto, save one on Astronomy,
Will turn upon “ Political Economy.”

LXXXIX.

That is your present theme for popularity:
Now that the Public Hedge hath scarce a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity
To show the people the best way to break.
My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
Reserve it) will be very sure to take.
Mean time read all the National Debt-sinkers,
And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

END OF CANTO THE TWELFTH.

D



NOTES TO CANTO XII.

Note 1, page 14, stanza xix.

Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.

See Mitford's Greece. "*Greciæ Verax.*" His great pleasure consists in praising tyrants, abusing Plutarch, spelling oddly, and writing quaintly; and what is strange after all, *his* is the best Modern History of Greece in any language, and he is perhaps the best of all modern historians whatsoever. Having named his sins, it is but fair to state his virtues—learning, labour, research, wrath, and partiality. I call the latter virtues in a writer, because they make him write in earnest.

Note 2, page 23, stanza xxxvii.

A hazy widower turned of forty's sure.

This line may puzzle the commentators more than the present generation.

Note 3, page 41, stanza lxxiii.

Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows.

The Russians, as is well known, run out from their hot baths to plunge into the Neva; a pleasant practical antithesis, which it seems does them no harm.

Note 4, page 46, stanza lxxxii.

The world to gaze upon those northern lights.

For a description and print of this inhabitant of the Polar Region and native country of the Auroræ Boreales, see Parry's Voyage in search of a North-West Passage.

Note 5, page 48, stanza lxxxvi.

As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.

A sculptor projected to hew Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander, with a city in one hand, and I believe a river in his pocket, with various other similar devices. But Alexander's gone, and Athos remains, I trust ere long to look over a nation of free men.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XIII.



DON JUAN.

CANTO XIII.

I.

I now mean to be serious ;—it is time,
Since laughter now-a-days is deemed too serious.
A jest at Vice by Virtue's called a crime,
And critically held as deleterious :
Besides, the sad's a source of the sublime,
Although when long a little apt to weary us ;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II.

The Lady Adeline Amundeville—

(’Tis an old Norman name, and to be found
In pedigrees by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)—
Was high-born, wealthy by her father’s will,
And beauteous, even where beauties most abound,
In Britain—which of course true patriots find
The goodliest soil of Body and of Mind.

III.

I’ll not gainsay them ; it is not my cue ;
I leave them to their taste, no doubt the best :
An eye’s an eye, and whether black or blue,
Is no great matter, so ’tis in request :
’Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue—
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair, and no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there’s a plain woman.

IV.

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turned for days
More quiet, when our Moon's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in Wisdom's ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place.

V.

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but their's is merely a chimera,
For they have passed life's equinoctial line:
But then they have their claret and madeira
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And County Meetings and the Parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

VI.

And is there not Religion, and Reform,
Peace, War, the taxes, and what's called the "Nation?"
The struggle to be Pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate, to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

VII.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, professed,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater"—⁽¹⁾
The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later..
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mode of Goëthe's Mephistopheles;

VIII.

But neither love nor hate in much excess ;

Though 'twas not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,

And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress

Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

IX.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad,

Because it makes us smile : his hero's right,
And still pursues the right ;—to curb the bad,

His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight,
His guerdon : 'tis his virtue makes him mad !

But his adventures form a sorry sight ;—
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real Epic unto all who have thought.

X.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,

To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;

Opposing singly the united strong,

From foreign yoke to free the helpless native ;—

Alas ! Must noblest views, like an old song,

Be for mere Fancy's sport a theme creative ?

A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and thick sought ?

And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote ?

XI.

Cervantes smiled Spain's Chivalry away ;

A single laugh demolished the right arm

Of his own country ;—seldom since that day

Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,

The world gave ground before her bright array ;

And therefore have his volumes done such harm,

That all their glory, as a composition,

Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

XII.

I'm "at my old Lunes"—digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville ;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil, nor meant ill ;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net,
(Fate is a good excuse for our own will)
And caught them ;—what do they *not* catch, methinks ?
But I'm not Œdipus, and life's a Sphinx.

XIII.

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution : "*Davus sum !*"
And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that's fair ;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last's a miracle, and such was reckoned,
And since that time there has not been a second.

XIV.

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well;
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English; imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion;
Proud of himself and her, the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seemed secure—
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

XV.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And formed a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what Courtesy calls friends.

XVI.

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow
In judging men—when once his judgment was
Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
Had all the pertinacity pride has,
Which knows no ebb to it's imperious flow,
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

XVII.

His friendships therefore, and no less aversions,
Though oft well founded, which confirmed but more
His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went before.
His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,
Of common likings, which make some deplore
What they should laugh at—the mere ague still
Of Men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII.

" 'Tis not in mortals to command success ;

" But *do you more*, Sempronius—*don't* deserve it ;"

And take my word, you won't have any less :

Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it ;

Give gently way, when there's too great a press ;

And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it,—

For, like a racer or a boxer training,

'Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

XIX.

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,

As most men do, the little or the great ;

The very lowest find out an inferior,

At least they think so, to exert their state

Upon: for there are very few things wearier

Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,

Which mortals generously would divide,

By bidding others carry while they ride.

XX.

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
O'er Juan he could no distinction claim ;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel ;
And, as he thought, in country much the same—
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
At which all modern nations vainly aim ;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the House up later.

XXI.

These were advantages : and then he thought—
It was his foible, but by no means sinister—
That few or none more than himself had caught
Court mysteries, having been himself a minister :
He liked to teach that which he had been taught,
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir ;
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a Patriot, and sometimes a Placeman.

XXII.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honoured him for his docility,
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop,—
For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII.

And then he talked with him about Madrid,
Constantinople, and such distant places;
Where people always did as they were bid,
Or did what they should not with foreign graces.
Of coursers also spake they : Henry rid
Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
Could back a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

XXIV.

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
And diplomatic dinners, or at other—
For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in Freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts,
His manner showed him sprung from a high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding marches with his quality.

XXV.

At Blank-Blank Square ;—for we will break no squares
By naming streets : since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,
That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank Square.

XXVI.

Also there bin (²) another pious reason

For making squares and streets anonymous ;

Which is, that there is scarce a single season

Which doth not shake some very splendid house

With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason—

A topic Scandal doth delight to rouse :

Such I might stumble over unawares,

Unless I knew the very chastest Squares.

XXVII.

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,

A place where peccadillos are unknown ;

But I have motives, whether wise or silly,

For letting that pure sanctuary alone.

Therefore I name not square, street, place, until I

Find one where nothing naughty can be shown,

A vestal shrine of innocence of heart :

Such are—but I have lost the London Chart.

XXVIII.

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,

Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,

As many other noble Scions were ;

And some who had but talent for their crest ;

Or wealth, which is a passport every where ;

Or even mere fashion, which indeed's the best
Recommendation ;—and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX.

And since “ there's safety in a multitude .

“ Of counsellors,” as Solomon has said,

Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood ;—

Indeed we see the daily proof displayed .

In Senates, at the Bar, in wordy feud,

Where'er collective wisdom can parade,

Which is the only cause that we can guess

Of Britain's present wealth and happiness ;—

XXX.

But as "there's safety grafted in the number
"Of Counsellors" for men,—thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber ;
Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex—
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks ;
And thus with women : howsoe'er it shock some's
Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

XXXI.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due estimation ;
And for coquetry, she disdained to wear it :
Secure of admiration, it's impression
Was faint, as of an every-day possession.

XXXII.

To all she was polite without parade ;
To some she showed attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery conveyed
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid ;—
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
To those who were or passed for meritorious,
Just to console sad Glory for being glorious ;

XXXIII.

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the Shades of those distinguished men,
Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise,
The praise of persecution. Gaze again
On the most favoured ; and amidst the blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-browed,
What can ye recognize ?—A gilded cloud.

XXXIV.

There also was of course in Adeline

That calm Patrician polish in the address,

Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line

Of any thing which Nature would express ;

Just as a Mandarin finds nothing fine,—

At least his manner suffers not to guess

That any thing he views can greatly please.

Perhaps we have borrowed this from the Chinese—

XXXV.

Perhaps from Horace : his "*Nil admirari*"

Was what he called the " Art of Happiness ;"

An art on which the artists greatly vary,

And have not yet attained to much success.

However, 'tis expedient to be wary :

Indifference *certainly* don't produce distress ;

And rash Enthusiasm in good society

Were nothing but a moral Inebriety.

XXXVI.

But Adeline was not indifferent : for

(*Now* for a common place !) beneath the snow,

As a Volcano holds the lava more

Within—*et cetera*. Shall I go on ?—No !

I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor :

So let the often used volcano go.

Poor thing ! How frequently, by me and others,

It hath been stirred up till its smoke quite smothers.

XXXVII.

I'll have another figure in a trice :—

What say you to a bottle of champagne ?

Frozen into a very vinous ice,

Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,

Yet in the very centre, past all price,

About a liquid glassful will remain ;

And this is stronger than the strongest grape

Could e'er express in its expanded shape :

XXXVIII.

'Tis the whole spirit brought to a quintessence ;
And thus the chilliest aspects may centre
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
And such are many—though I only meant her,
From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,
On which the Muse has always sought to enter :—
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you have broken their confounded ice.

XXXIX.

But after all they are a North-West Passage
Unto the glowing India of the soul ;
And as the good ships sent upon that message
Have not exactly ascertained the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage)
Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal ;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost,
(A chance still) 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

XL.

And young beginners may as well commence

With quiet cruizing o'er the ocean woman;

While those who are not beginners, should have sense

Enough to make for port, ere Time shall summon

With his grey signal flag : and the past tense,

The dreary "*Fuimus*" of all things human,

Must be declined, while life's thin thread's spun out

Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

XLI.

But Heaven must be diverted : its diversion

Is sometimes truculent—but never mind :

The world upon the whole is worth the assertion

(If but for comfort).that all things are kind :

And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,

Of the two Principles, but leaves behind

As many doubts as any other doctrine

Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

XLII.

The English winter—ending in July,
To recommence in August—now was done.
’Tis the postillion’s Paradise : wheels fly ;
On roads, East, South, North, West, there is a run.
But for post horses who finds sympathy ?
Man’s pity for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

XLIII.

The London winter’s ended in July—
Sometimes a little later. I don’t err
In this : whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver
My Muse a glass of Weatherology ;
For Parliament is our Barometer :
Let Radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV.

When its quicksilver's down at zero,—lo !

Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage !

Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,

And happiest they who horses can engage ;

The turnpikes glow with dust ; and Rotten Row

Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age ;

And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,

Sigh—as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV.

They and their bills, “ Arcadians both,” (,) are left

To the Greek Kalends of another session.

Alas ! to them of ready cash bereft,

What hope remains ? Of *hope* the full possession,

Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,

At a long date—till they can get a fresh one,—

Hawked about at a discount, small or large ;—

Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI.

But these are trifles. Downward flies my Lord
Nodding beside my Lady in his carriage.
Away! away! "Fresh horses!" are the word,
And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;
The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the watered wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads for a small reminiscence.

XLVII.

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the dickey—
That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
Tricked out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint, "*Così Viaggino i Ricchi!*"
(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd; and what's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII.

The London winter and the country summer

Were well nigh over. 'Tis perhaps a pity,
When Nature wears the gown that doth become her,
To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or witty,
Ere Patriots their true *country* can remember ;—
But there's no shooting (save grouse) till September.

XLIX.

I've done with my tirade. The world was gone ;
The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
Were vanished to be what they call alone,—
That is, with thirty servants for parade,
As many guests or more ; before whom groan
As many covers, duly, daily laid.
Let none accuse Old England's hospitality—
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L.

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline

Departed, like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine ;

The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a longer line,

Where Time through heroes and through beauties
steers ;

And oaks, as olden as their pedigree,
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

LI.

A paragraph in every paper told

Of their departure : such is modern fame :
’Tis pity that it takes no further hold

Than an advertisement, or much the same ;
When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.

The Morning Post was foremost to proclaim—
“ Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
“ Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

LII.

" We understand the splendid host intends

" To entertain, this autumn, a select

" And numerous party of his noble friends ;

" 'Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite
correct,

" The Duke of D— the shooting season spends,

" With many more by rank and fashion decked ;

" Also a foreigner of high condition,

" The Envoy of the secret Russian Mission."

LIII.

And thus we see—who doubts the Morning Post ?

(Whose articles are like the " Thirty-Nine,"

Which those most swear to who believe them most)—

Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordained to shine,

Decked by the rays reflected from his host,

With those who, Pope says, " greatly daring dine."

'Tis odd, but true,—last war the News abounded

More with these dinners than the killed or wounded;—

LIV.

As thus : " On Thursday there was a grand dinner ;
 " Present, Lords A. B. C."—Earls, dukes, by name
Announced with no less pomp than victory's winner :
 Then underneath, and in the very same
Column : Date, " Falmouth. There has lately been here
 " The Slap-Dash Regiment, so well known to fame ;
" Whose loss in the late action we regret :
" The vacancies are filled up—see Gazette."

LV.

To Norman Abbey whirled the noble pair,—
 An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion, of a rich and rare
 Mixed Gothic, such as Artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
 Withal : it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

LVI.

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters—as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmured like a bird.

LVII.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around : the wild fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed :
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

LVIII.

Its outlet dash'd into a steep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding
Its shriller echoes—like an infant made
Quiet—sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd
Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

LIX.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile,
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand Arch, which once screened many an aisle.
These last had disappear'd—a loss to Art:
The first yet frowned superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable Arch.

LX.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,

Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,

But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice—as tell

The annals of full many a line undone,—
The gallant Cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

LXI.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,

The Virgin Mother of the God-born child,
With her son in her blessed arms, look'd round;
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.

This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship, wake some thoughts divine.

LXII.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate : now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

LXIII.

But in the noontide of the Moon, and when
The wind is winged from one point of heaven,
There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
Is musical—a dying accent driven
Through the huge Arch, which soars and sinks again.
Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the Night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonized by the old choral wall :

LXIV.

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
(Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fixed hour)
To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower:
The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
The fact:—I've heard it,—once perhaps too much.

LXV.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint—
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a Saint:
The spring gush'd through grim mouths, of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

LXVI.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved : the cloisters still were stable,
The cells too and refectory, I ween :
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

LXVII.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the Arts,
Might shock a Connoisseur ; but when combined,
Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts.
We gaze upon a Giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to Nature.

LXVIII.

Steel Barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd Earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation ;
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their station :
And Countesses mature in robes and pearls :
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

LXIX.

Judges in very formidable ermine
Were there, with brows that did not much invite
The accused to think their Lordships would determine
His cause by leaning much from might to right :
Bishops, who had not left a single sermon ;
Attornies-General, awful to the sight,
As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
Of the "Star Chamber" than of "Habeas Corpus."

LXX.

Generals, some all in armour, of the old

And iron time, ere Lead had ta'en the lead ;

Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,

Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed :

Lordlings with staves of white, or keys of gold :

Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contain'd the steed ;

And here and there some stern high Patriot stood ;

Who could not get the place for which he sued.

LXXI.

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,

Fatigued with these hereditary glories,

There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,

Or wilder grouse of savage Salvatore's : (4)

Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone

In Vernet's ocean lights ; and there the stories

Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted

His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII.

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Loraine ;

There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain.

Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic Anchorite :—
But lo ! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,

Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouthed goblet makes me feel quite Danish (°)
Or Dutch with thirst—What ho ! a flask of Rhenish.

LXXIII.

Oh, reader ! If that thou canst read,—and know,

'Tis not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader ; there must go

Virtues of which both you and I have need.
Firstly, begin with the beginning—(though

That clause is hard) ; and secondly, proceed ;
Thirdly, commence not with the end—or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

LXXIV.

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,
While I, without remorse of rhyme; or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
Dan Phœbus takes me for an auctioneer.
That Poets were so from their earliest date,
By Homer's "Catalogue of Ships," is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate—
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

LXXV.

The mellow Autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket :—lynx-like is his aim,
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
Ah, nutbrown Partridges! Ah, brilliant Pheasants!
And ah, ye Poachers!—"Tis no sport for peasants.

LXXVI.

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines
The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The Claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline,
Which makes the Southern Autumn's day appear
As if 'twould to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,—
Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine,—
The sea-coal fires, the earliest of the year;
Without doors too she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gained in yellow.

LXXVIII.

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura*—

Rife with more horns than hounds—she hath the chase,
So animated that it might allure a

Saint from his beads to join the jocund race ;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura, ⁽⁶⁾

And wear the Melton jacket for a space :—
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of Bores, who ought to be made game.

LXXIX.

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
Consisted of—we give the sex the pas—
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke ; the Countess Crabbe ;

The ladies Scilly, Busey ;—Miss Eclât,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabbey,

And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw ;
Also the Honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep :

LXXX.

With other Countesses of Blank—but rank ;

At once the “ lie ” and the “ *élite* ” of crowds ;

Who pass like water filtered in a tank,

All purged and pious from their native clouds ;

Or paper turned to money by the Bank :

No matter how or why, the passport shrouds

The “ *passée* ” and the passed ; for good society

Is no less famed for tolerance than piety :

LXXXI.

That is, up to a certain point ; which point

Forms the most difficult in punctuation.

Appearances appear to form the joint

On which it hinges in a higher station ;

And so that no explosion cry “ Aroint

“ Thee, Witch ! ” or each Medea has her Jason ;

Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)

“ *Omne tulit punctum, quæ miscuit utile dulci.* ”

LXXXII.

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,

Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.

I've seen a virtuous woman put down quite

By the mere combination of a Coterie ;

Also a So-So Matron boldly fight

Her way back to the world by dint of plottery,

And shine the very *Siria* of the spheres,

Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII.

I have seen more than I'll say :—but we will see

How our *villeggiatura* will get on.

The party might consist of thirty-three

Of highest caste—the Brahmins of the ton.

I have named a few, not foremost in degree,

But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.

By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst these,

There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV.

There was Parolles too, the legal bully,

Who limits all his battles to the bar

And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,

He shows more appetite for words than war.

There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who had newly

Come out and glimmer'd as a six-weeks' star.

There was Lord Pyrrho too, the great freethinker;

And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

LXXXV.

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a—duke,

“Aye, every inch a” duke; there were twelve peers

Like Charlemagne's—and all such peers in look

And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears

For commoners had ever them mistook.

There were the six Miss Rawbolds—pretty dears!

All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set

Less on a convert than a coronet.

LXXXVI.

There were four Honourable Misters, whose
Honour was more before their names than after;
There was the preux Chevalier de la Ruse,
Whom France and Fortune lately deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because—such was his magic power to please—
The dice seem'd charm'd too with his repartees.

LXXXVII.

There was Dick Dubious the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the *soi-disant* mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII.

There was Jack Jargon the gigantic guardsman ;
And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welch Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,
In his grave office so completely skill'd,
That when a culprit came for condemnation,
He had his Judge's joke for consolation.

LXXXIX.

Good company's a chess-board,—there are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the world's
a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings;
Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether without aim,
Alighting rarely:—were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

XC.

I had forgotten—but must not forget—

An Orator, the latest of the session,

Who had deliver'd well a very set

Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression

Upon debate: the papers echoed yet

With this *debüt*, which made a strong impression,

And rank'd with what is every day display'd—

“The best first speech that ever yet was made.”

XCI.

Proud of his “Hear him!” proud too of his vote

And lost virginity of oratory,

Proud of his learning (just enough to quote)

He revel'd in his Ciceronian glory:

With memory excellent to get by rote,

With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,

Graced with some merit and with more effrontery,

“His Country's pride,” he came down to the country.

XCII.

These also were two wits by acclamation,

Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education ;

But Strongbow's wit was of more polish'd breed :

Longbow was rich in an imagination,

As beautiful and bounding as a steed,

But sometimes stumbling over a potatoe,—

While Strongbow's best things might have come from

Cato.

XCIII.

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord ;

But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,

With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,

And make a music, whether flat or sharp.

Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word ;

At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp :

Both wits—one born so, and the other bred,

This by his heart—his rival by his head.



XCIV.

If all these seem an heterogeneous mass

To be assembled at a country seat,

Yet think, a specimen of every class

Is better than an humdrum *tête-à-tête*.

The days of Comedy are gone, alas!

When Congreve's fool could vie with Moliere's *bête*:

Society is smooth'd to that excess,

That manners hardly differ more than dress.

XCV.

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground—

Ridiculous enough, but also dull;

Professions too are no more to be found

Professional; and there is nought to cull

Of folly's fruit: for, though your fools abound,

They're barren and not worth the pains to pull.

Society is now one polish'd horde,

Form'd of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored*.

XCVI.

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning

The scanty but right-well thrashed ears of truth ;

And, gentle reader ! when you gather meaning.

You may be Boaz, and I—modest Ruth.

Further I'd quote, but Scripture intervening,

Forbids. A great impression in my youth

Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries

“ That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.” (?)

XCVII.

But what we can we glean in this vile age

Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.

I must not quite omit the talking sage,

Kit-Cat, the famous conversationist,

Who, in his common-place book, had a page

Prepared each morn for evenings. “ List, oh list !”—

“ Alas, poor Ghost !”—What unexpected woes

Await those who have studied their *bon mots* !

XCVIII.

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch ;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor *bate* (abate) their hearers of an *inch*,
But take an ell—and make a great sensation,
If possible : and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt's the best.

XCIX.

Lord Henry and his Lady were the hosts ;
The party we have touch'd on were the guests :
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.
I will not dwell upon ragoûts or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests,
That happiness for Man—the hungry sinner !—
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

C.

Witness the lands which "flow'd with milk and honey,"

Held out unto the hungry Israelites:

To this we have added since, the love of money,

The only sort of pleasure which requites.

Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;

We tire of Mistresses and Parasites;

But oh, Ambrosial Cash! Ah! who would lose thee?

When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

CI.

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,

Or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport—

The first thing boys like, after play and fruit:

The middle-aged, to make the day more short;

For *ennui* is a growth of English root,

Though nameless in our language:—we retort

The fact for words, and let the French translate

That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

CII.

The elderly walked through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or sauntered through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot-house several strictures,
Or rode a nag, which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII.

But none were "*géné*:" the great hour of union
Was rang by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time—or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.

CIV.

The ladies—some rouged, some a little pale—

Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or walked ; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad ;
Discussed the fashion which might next prevail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV.

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.

The earth has nothing like a She epistle,
And hardly heaven—because it never ends.

I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon :—you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI.

Then there were billiards ; cards too, but *no* dice ;—

Save in the Clubs no man of honour plays ;—

Boats when 'twas water, skaiting when 'twas ice,

And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days :

And angling too, that solitary vice,

Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says :

The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet

Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it. ⁽⁸⁾

CVII.

With evening came the banquet and the wine ;

The *conversazione* ; the duet,

Attuned by voices more or less divine,

(My heart or head aches with the memory yet.)

The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine ;

But the two youngest loved more to be set

Down to the harp—because to music's charms

They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

CVIII.

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,

For then the gentlemen were rather tired)

Display'd some sylph-like figures in its maze :

Then there was small-talk ready when required ;

Flirtation—but decorous ; the mere praise

Of charms that should or should not be admired.

The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,

And then retreated soberly—at ten.

CIX.

The politicians, in a nook apart,

Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres ;

The wits watched every loop-hole for their art,

To introduce a *bon mot* head and ears :

Small is the rest of those who would be smart,

A moment's good thing may have cost them years

Before they find an hour to introduce it,

And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.

CX.

But all was gentle and aristocratic

In this our party ; polish'd, smooth and cold,
As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.

There now are no 'Squire Westerns as of old ;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,

But fair as then, or fairer to behold :
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

CXI.

They separated at an early hour ;

That is, ere midnight—which is London's noon :
But in the country ladies seek their bower

A little earlier than the waning Moon.
Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower—

May the rose call back its true colours soon !
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
And lower the price of rouge—at least some winters.

END OF THE THIRTEENTH CANTO.

NOTES TO CANTO XIII.

Note 1, page 58, stanza vii.

Right honestly " he liked an honest hater !"

" Sir, I like a good hater."—See the Life of Dr. Johnson, &c.

Note 2, page 68, stanza xxvi.

Also there bin another pious reason.

" With every thing that pretty bin,

" My lady sweet arise."—SHAKESPEARE.

Note 3, page 77, stanza xlv.

They and their bills, " Arcadians both," are left.

" Arcades Ambo."

Note 4, page 90, stanza lxxi.

Or wilder groupe of savage Salvatore's.

Salvator Rosa.

Note 5, page 91, stanza lxxii.

His bell-mouthed goblet makes me feel quite Danish.

If I err not, " Your Dane" is one of Iago's Catalogue of Nations " exquisite in their drinking."

Note 6, page 94, stanza lxxviii.

Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura.

In Assyria.

Note 7, page 103, stanza xcvi.

“ *That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.*”

“ Mrs. Adams answered Mr. Adams, that it was blasphemous to talk of Scripture out of church.” This dogma was broached to her husband—the best Christian in any book.—See Joseph Andrews, in the latter chapters.

Note 8, page 108, stanza cvi.

*The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.*

It would have taught him humanity at least. This sentimental savage, whom it is a mode to quote (amongst the novelists) to show their sympathy for innocent sports and old songs, teaches how to sew up frogs, and break their legs by way of experiment, in addition to the art of angling, the cruellest, the coldest, and the stupidest of pretended sports. They may talk about the beauties of nature, but the angler merely thinks of his dish of fish; he has no leisure to take his eyes from off the streams, and a single *bite* is worth to him more than all the scenery around. Besides, some fish bite best on a rainy day. The whale, the shark, and the tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them; even net fishing, trawling, &c. are more humane and useful—but angling! No angler can be a good man.

“ One of the best men I ever knew;—as humane, delicate-minded, generous, and excellent a creature as any in the world, was an angler: true, he angled with painted flies, and would have been incapable of the extravagances of I. Walton.”

The above addition was made by a friend in reading over the MS.—“ *Audi alteram partem*”—I leave it to counterbalance my own observation.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XIV.

DON JUAN.

CANTO XIV.

I.

If from great Nature's or our own abyss

Of thought, we could but snatch a certainty,

Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss—

But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy.

One system eats another up, and this

Much as old Saturn ate his progeny ;

For when his pious consort gave him stones

In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II.

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question ?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.
Nothing more true than *not* to trust your senses ;
And yet what are your other evidences ?

III.

For me, I know nought ; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, condemn ; and what know *you*,
Except perhaps that you were born to die ?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

IV.

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

V.

'Tis round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there's a courage which grows out of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to *know* it:—when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns,—you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI.

'Tis true, you don't—but, pale and struck with terror,

Retire : but look into your past impression !

And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror

Of your own thoughts, in all their self confession,

The lurking bias, be it truth or error,

To the *unknown* ; a secret prepossession,

To plunge with all your fears—but where? You know not,

And that's the reason why you do—or do not.

VII.

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.

Gent. Reader, nothing ; a mere speculation,

For which my sole excuse is—'tis my way,

Sometimes *with* and sometimes without occasion

I write what's uppermost, without delay ;

This narrative is not meant for narration,

But a mere airy and fantastic basis,

To build up common things with common places.

VIII.

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,

“ Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind
blows ;”

And such a straw, borne on by human breath,

Is Poesy, according as the mind glows ;

A paper kite, which flies 'twixt life and death,

A shadow which the onward Soul behind throws :

And mine's a bubble not blown up for praise,

But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX.

The world is all before me, or behind ;

For I have seen a portion of that same,

And quite enough for me to keep in mind ;—

Of passions too, I have proved enough to blame,

To the great pleasure of our friends, mankind,

Who like to mix some slight alloy with fame :

For I was rather famous in my time,

Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

X.

I have brought this world about my ears, and eke
The other ; that's to say, the Clergy—who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote, because my mind was full,
And now because I feel it growing dull.

XI.

But “ why then publish ? ”—There are no rewards
Of fame or profit, when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn,—why do you play at cards ?
Why drink ? Why read ?—To make some hour less
dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery ;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink—I have had at least my dream.

XII.

I think that were I *certain* of success,

I hardly could compose another line :

So long I've battled either more or less,

That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.

This feeling 'tis not easy to express,

And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.

In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing—

The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction :

She gathers a repertory of facts,

Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,

But mostly sings of human things and acts—

And that's one cause she meets with contradiction ;

For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts ;

And were her object only what's call'd glory,

With more ease too she'd tell a different story.

XIV.

Love, war, a tempest—surely there's variety ;

Also a seasoning slight of lucubration ;

A bird's-eye view too of that wild, Society ;

A slight glance thrown on men of every station.

If you have nought else, here's at least satiety

Both in performance and in preparation ;

And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,

Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

XV.

The portion of this world which I at present

Have taken up to fill the following sermon,

Is one of which there's no description recent :

The reason why, is easy to determine :

Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,

There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,

A dull and family likeness through all ages,

Of no great promise for poetic pages.

XVI.

With much to excite, there's little to exalt ;

Nothing that speaks to all men and all times ;

A sort of varnish over every fault ;

A kind of common-place, even in their crimes :

Factitious passions, wit without much salt,

A want of that true nature which sublimés

Whate'er it shows with truth ; a smooth monotony

Of character, in those at least who have got any.

XVII.

Sometimes indeed, like soldiers off parade,

They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill ;

But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,

And they must be or seem what they were : still

Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade ;

But when of the first sight you have had your fill,

It palls—at least it did so upon me,

This Paradise of Pleasure and *Ennui*.

XVIII.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more ;
With dandies dined ; heard senators declaiming ;
Seen beauties brought to market by the score ;
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming ;
There's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those "*ci-devant jeunes hommes*" who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

XIX.

'Tis said—indeed a general complaint—
That no one has succeeded in describing
The *Monde*, exactly as they ought to paint.
Some say, that Authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral gibing ;
And that their books have but one style in common—
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

XX.

But this can't well be true, just now; for writers
Are grown of the *Beau Monde* a part potential:
I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
Especially when young, for that's essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most consequential—
The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe.

XXI.

"*Haud ignara loquor*:" these are *Nugæ*, "*quarum*
"*Pars parva fui*," but still Art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
"*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgaret*"—
Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

XXII.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal—

Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of Freemasons ;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's .
The grand Arcanum's not for men to see all ;
My music has some mystic diapasons ;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII.

Alas ! Worlds fall—and Woman, since she fell'd
The World (as, since that history, less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held)
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor Thing of Usages ! Coerc'd, compell'd,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too entailed upon their chins,—

XXIV.

A daily plague, which in the aggregate

May average on the whole with parturition.

But as to women, who can penetrate

The real sufferings of their she condition ?

Man's very sympathy with their estate

Has much of selfishness and more suspicion.

Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,

But form good housekeepers, to breed a nation.

XXV.

All this were very well and can't be better ;

But even this is difficult, Heaven knows !

So many troubles from her birth beset her,

Such small distinction between friends and foes,

The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,

That—but ask any woman if she'd choose

(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been

Female or male ? a school-boy or a Queen ?

XXVI.

“ Petticoat Influence” is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach ;
But, since beneath it upon earth we are brought
By various joltings of life’s hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat—
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a Miser’s hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal—
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief—for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ancle ? ●

XXVIII.

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a Sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing,—
'Tis pleasant, if *then* any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

XXIX.

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun*—
Whether a sky's or tradesman's, is all one.

XXX.

And in-door life is less poetical ;

And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,

With which I could not brew a pastoral

But be it as it may, a bard must meet

All difficulties, whether great or small,

To spoil his undertaking or complete,

And work away like spirit upon matter,

Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

XXXI.

Juan—in this respect at least like saints—

Was all things unto people of all sorts,

And lived contentedly, without complaints,

In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts—

Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,

And mingling modestly in toils or sports.

He likewise could be most things to all women,

Without the coxcombry of certain *She* Men.

XXXII.

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange ;
 'Tis also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
 Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger :
But Juan had been early taught to range
 The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd Avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII.

And now in this new field, with some applause,
 He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never *craned*, ⁽¹⁾ and made but few "*faux pas*,"
 And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the laws
 Of hunting—for the sagest youth is frail ;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several Country Gentlemen.

XXXIV.

But on the whole, to general admiration

He acquitted both himself and horse: the 'squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;

The boors cried "Dang it! who'd have thought it?"—

Sires,

The Nestors of the sporting generation

Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;

The Huntsman's self relented to a grin,

And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV.

Such were his trophies;—not of spear and shield,

But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes fox's brushes;

Yet I must own,—although in this I yield

To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes,—

He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,

Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,

And what not, though he rode beyond all price,

Ask'd next day, "If men ever hunted *twice*?"

XXXVI.

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race,—
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether Saint or Sinner,—
He did not fall asleep just after dinner.

XXXVII.

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue ;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert ;
And smiling but in secret—cunning rogue !
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer ;—
In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII.

And then he danced ;—all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime ;—he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense—
A thing in footing indispensable :
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

XXXIX.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure ;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour ;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a Crotchet Critic's rigour.
Such classic *pas—sans* flaws—set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero ;

XL.

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco, which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The "*tout ensemble*" of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft Ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the colour
Of bards and prozers, words are void of colour.

XLI.

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.
Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved "*tracasserie*,"
Began to treat him with some small "*agaçerie*."

XLII.

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, *grand Monde*.
I'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground ;
Besides there might be falsehood in what's stated :
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLIII.

This noble personage began to look
A little black upon this new flirtation ;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
Mere freedoms of the female corporation.
Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke !
'Twill but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

XLIV.

The circle smil'd, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd ;
The misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd ;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd ;
Some would not deem such women could be found ;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard ;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound ;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV.

But what is odd, none ever named the Duke,
Who, one might think, was something in the affair.
True, he was absent, and 'twas rumour'd, took
But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did : if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare :
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out.

XLVI.

But, oh that I should ever pen so sad a line !

Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the Duchess' conduct free ;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Looked grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

XLVII.

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy :

'Tis so becoming to the soul and face ;
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet Friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace ?
Consoling us with—" Would you had thought twice !
" Ah ! if you had but follow'd my advice !"

XLVIII.

Oh, Job! you had two friends: one's quite enough,

Especially when we are ill at ease;

They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough,

Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.

Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,

As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:

When your affairs come round, one way or t'other,

Go to the coffee-house, and take another. (2)

XLIX.

But this is not my maxim: had it been,

Some heart-aches had been spared me; yet I care not—

I would not be a tortoise in his screen

Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not.

'Tis better on the whole to have felt and seen

That which humanity may bear, or bear not:

'Twill teach discernment to the sensitive,

And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

●

L.

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so,"
Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the past,
Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,
And solace your slight lapse 'gainst "*bonos mores*,"
With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend;
But Juan also shared in her austerity,
But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

•

LII.

These forty days' advantage of her years—

And her's were those which can face calculation,
Boldly referring to the list of peers

And noble births, nor dread the enumeration—
Gave her a right to have maternal fears

For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII.

This may be fixed at somewhere before thirty—

Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
The strictest in chronology and virtue
Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
Oh, Time! Why dost not pause? Thy scythe, so dirty
With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best :
'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
For she had seen the world, and stood its test,
As I have said in—I forget what page ;
My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time ;—but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

LV.

At sixteen she came out ; presented, vaunted,
She put all coronets into commotion :
At seventeen too the world was still enchanted
With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean :
At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, called “ the Happiest of Men.”

LVI.

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing
winters,

Admired, adored ; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
Without the apparel of being circumspect :
They could not even glean the slightest splinters
From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
To bear a son and heir—and one miscarriage.

LVII.

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her
Those little glitterers of the London night ;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her—
She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder ;
But whatsoe'er she wished, she acted right ;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue, dignify
A Woman, so she's good, what does it signify ?

LVIII.

I hate a motive like a lingering bottle,

Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,

Leaving all claretless the unmoistened throttle,

Especially with politics on hand ;

I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,

Who whirl the dust as Simooms whirl the sand ;

I hate it, as I hate an argument,

A Laureate's ode, or servile Peer's " Content."

LIX.

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things,

They are so much intertwined with the earth :

So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,

I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.

To trace all actions to their secret springs

Would make indeed some melancholy mirth ;

But this is not at present my concern,

And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern. (3)

LX.

With the kind view of saving an *eclât*,

Both to the Duchess and diplomatist,

The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw

That Juan was unlikely to resist—

(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*

In England ranks quite on a different list

From those of other lands unblest with Juries,

Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is ;)—

LXI.

The Lady Adeline resolved to take

Such measures as she thought might best impede

The further progress of this sad mistake.

She thought with some simplicity indeed ;

But innocence is bold even at the stake,

And simple in the world, and doth not need

Nor use those palisades by dames erected,

Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII.

It was not that she fear'd the very worst :

His Grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons ; but she dreaded first
The magic of her Grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seemed to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

LXIII.

Her Grace too pass'd for being an Intrigante,
And somewhat *méchante* in her amorous sphere ;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to *make* a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year ;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
And—what is worst of all—won't let you go :

LXIV.

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,

Or make a Werter of him in the end.

No wonder then a purer soul should dread

This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend ;

It were much better to be wed or dead,

Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend.

'Tis best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,

If that a "*bonne fortune*" be really "*bonne*."

LXV.

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,

Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,

She called her husband now and then apart,

And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile

Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art

To wean Don Juan from the Siren's wile ;

And answer'd, like a Statesman or a Prophet,

In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

LXVI.

Firstly, he said, " he never interfered

" In any body's business but the king's :"

Next, that " he never judged from what appear'd,

" Without strong reason, of those sorts of things :"

Thirdly, that " Juan had more brain than beard,

" And was not to be held in leading strings ;"

And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,

" That good but rarely came from good advice."

LXVII.

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth

Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse

To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth,

At least as far as *bien-séance* allows :

That time would temper Juan's faults of youth ;

That young men rarely made monastic vows ;

That opposition only more attaches——

But here a messenger brought in dispatches :

LXVIII.

And being of the Council called " the Privy,"

Lord Henry walk'd into his Cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy

To tell how he reduced the nation's debt ;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,

It is because I do not know them yet,
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

LXIX.

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,

Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coined in conversation's mint,

And pass, for want of better, though not new :
Then broke his packet, to see what was in't,

And having casually glanced it through,
Retired ; and, as he went out, calmly kissed her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

LXX.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birth-days, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a Chamberlain—
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

LXXI.

But there was something wanting on the whole—
I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell—
Which pretty women—the sweet souls!—call *Soul*.
Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

LXXII.

Still there was something wanting, as I've said—

That undefinable “*Je ne sais quoi*,”

Which, for what I know, may of yore have led

To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy

The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed ;

Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy

Was much inferior to King Menelaus ;—

But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII.

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,

Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved.

By turns the difference of the several sexes :

Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved.

The sensual for a short time but connects us—

The sentimental boasts to be unmoved ;

But both together form a kind of centaur,

Upon whose back 'tis better not to venture.

LXXIV.

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*

Is that for which the Sex are always seeking ;

But how to fill up that same vacant part ?

There lies the rub—and this they are but weak in.

Frail mariners afloat without a chart,

They run before the wind through high seas breaking ;

And when they have made the shore through ev'ry shock,

'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

LXXV.

There is a flower called " Love in Idleness,"

For which see Shakspeare's ever blooming garden ;—

I will not make his great description less,

And beg his British Godship's humble pardon,

If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,

I touch a single leaf where he is warden ;—

But though the flower is different, with the French

Or Swiss Rousseau, cry, "*Voilà la Pervenche !*"

LXXVI.

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean

To say is, not that Love is Idleness,
But that in Love such Idleness has been

An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;

Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her Supercargo.

LXXVII.

"*Beatus ille procul!*" from "*negotius*,"

Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong;
His other maxim, "*Noscitur a sociis*,"

Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
Unless good company he kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

LXXVIII.

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,

Eve made up millinery with fig leaves—

The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing,

As far as I know, that the Church receives :

And since that time it need not cost much showing,

That many of the ills o'er which man grieves,

And still more women, spring from not employing

Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

LXXIX.

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,

A rack of pleasures, where we must invent

A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.

Bards may sing what they please about *Content* ;

Contented, when translated, means but cloyed ;

And hence arise the woes of sentiment,

Blue devils, and Blue-stockings, and Romances

Reduced to practice and perform'd like dances.

LXXX.

I do declare, upon an affidavit,

Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;

Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,

Would some believe that such a tale had been :

But such intent I never had, nor have it;

Some truths are better kept behind a screen,

Especially when they would look like lies;

I therefore deal in generalities.

LXXXI.

"An oyster may be cross'd in Love,"—and why?

Because he mopeth idly in his shell,

And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,

Much as a monk may do within his cell :

And *à propos* of monks, their piety

With sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;

Those vegetables of the Catholic creed

Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII.

Oh, Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights:
You have freed the *blacks*—now pray shut up the whites.

LXXXIII.

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander;
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that "sauce for goose is sauce for gander,"
And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall?
Shut up each high heroic Salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay's but small);
Shut up—no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 'twill cost us all another million.

LXXXIV.

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out ;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of *soi-disant* sound mind.
This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among mankind ;
But till that point *d'appui* is found, alas !
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as 'twas.

LXXXV.

Our gentle Adeline had one defect—
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion ;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 'tis frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one ;
But when the latter works its own undoing,
It's inner crash is like an Earthquake's ruin.

LXXXVI.

She loved her lord, or thought so ; but *that* love

Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,

The stone of Sysiphus, if once we move

Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.

She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,

No bickerings, no connubial turmoil :

Their union was a model to behold,

Serene, and noble,—conjugal, but cold

LXXXVII.

There was no great disparity of years,

Though much in temper ; but they never clash'd :

They moved like stars united in their spheres,

Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,

Where mingled and yet separate appears

The river from the lake, all blueely dash'd

Through the serene and placid glassy deep,

Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

LXXXVIII.

Now when she once had ta'en an interest

In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best—

Intense intentions are a dangerous matter :
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water .
Upon her mind ; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

LXXXIX.

But when it was, she had that lurking demon

Of double nature, and thus doubly named—
Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and seamen,
That is, when they succeed ; but greatly blamed
As *obstinacy*, both in men and women,

Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is tamed :—
And 'twill perplex the casuists in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

XC.

Had Bonaparte won at Waterloo,

It had been firmness ; now 'tis pertinacity :

Must the event decide between the two ?

I leave it to your people of sagacity

To draw the line between the false and true,

If such can e'er be drawn by man's capacity :

My business is with Lady Adeline,

Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI.

She knew not her own heart ; then how should I ?

I think not she was *then* in love with Juan :

If so, she would have had the strength to fly

The wild sensation, unto her a new one :

She merely felt a common sympathy

(I will not say it was a false or true one)

In him, because she thought he was in danger—

Her husband's friend, her own, young, and a stranger.

XCII.

She was, or thought she was, his friend—and this

Without the farce of friendship, or romance

Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss

Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,

Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.

To thus much Adeline would not advance ;

But of such friendship as man's may to man be,

She was as capable as woman can be.

XCIII.

No doubt the secret influence of the sex

Will there, as also in the ties of blood,

An innocent predominance annex,

And tune the concord to a finer mood.

If free from passion, which all friendship checks,

And your true feelings fully understood,

No friend like to a woman earth discovers,

So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

XCIV.

Love bears within it's breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should "the *tender* Passion" e'er be *tough*?

XCV.

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a Zany.
I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

XCVI.

I've also seen some female *friends* ('tis odd,
But true—as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
At home, far more than ever yet was Love—
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCVII.

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine :
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense* ;
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.

XCVIII.

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish ;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd "small,"
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto ; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

XCIX.

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter :
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this Epic Satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall ; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

C.

But great things spring from little :—Would you think,

That in our youth, as dangerous a passion

As e'er brought man and woman to the brink

Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,

As few would ever dream could form the link

Of such a sentimental situation?

You'll never guess, I'll bet you millions, milliards—

It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

CI.

'Tis strange—but true ; for Truth is always strange,

Stranger than Fiction : if it could be told,

How much would novels gain by the exchange!

How differently the world would men behold!

How oft would vice and virtue places change!

The new world would be nothing to the old,

If some Columbus of the moral seas

Would show mankind their soul's Antipodes.

CII.

What "Antres vast and desarts idle," then

Would be discover'd in the human soul!

What Icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,

With Self-love in the centre as their Pole!

What Anthropophagi is nine of ten

Of those who hold the kingdoms in controul!

Were things but only call'd by their right name,

Cæsar himself would be ashamed of Fame.

END OF THE FOURTEENTH CANTO.

NOTES TO CANTO XIV.

Note 1, page 131, stanza xxxiii.

And never craned, and made but few faux pas.

Craning.—"To crane" is, or was, an expression used to denote a Gentleman's stretching out his neck over a hedge, "to look before he leaped:"—a pause in his "vaulting ambition," which in the field doth occasion some delay and execration in those who may be immediately behind the equestrian sceptic. "Sir, if you don't choose to take the lead, let me"—was a phrase which generally sent the aspirant on again; and to good purpose: for though "the horse and rider" might fall, they made a gap, through which, and over him and his steed, the field might follow.

Note 2, page 139, stanza xlviii.

Go to the coffee-house, and take another.

In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned, that somebody regretting the loss of a friend, was answered by an universal Pylades: "When I lose one, I go to the Saint James's Coffee-house, and take another."

I recollect having heard an anecdote of the same kind. Sir W. D. was a great gamester. Coming in one day to the

club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy. "What is the matter, Sir William?" cried Hare of facetious memory. "Ah!" replied Sir W. "I have just *lost* poor Lady D." "*Lost!* What *at*—*Quinze* or *Hazard*?" was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist.

Note 3, page 144, stanza lix.

And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

The famous Chancellor Oxenstiern said to his son, on the latter expressing his surprise upon the great effects arising from petty causes in the presumed mystery of politics: "You see by this, my son, with how little wisdom the kingdoms of the world are governed."



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